DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 419 866 UD 032 341

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TITLE Academic and Support Ninth Grade Restructuring Programs as Reported by the Ninth Grade Administrators.
INSTITUTION Research and Evaluation Specialists, Inc.
SPONS AGENCY Detroit Public Schools, MI. Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment.
PUB DATE 1998-04-00
NOTE 80p.; For related documents see UD 032 006, UD 032 187-188, UD 032 205, UD 032 229, UD 032 248, and UD 032 340.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; *Administrators; After School Programs; *Dropout Prevention; Enrichment Activities; *Grade 9; *High School Students; High Schools; Mentors; Program Effectiveness; Program Evaluation; *School Restructuring; Self Esteem; *Urban Schools; Urban Youth
IDENTIFIERS *Detroit Public Schools MI

ABSTRACT

As part of the evaluation of the Ninth Grade Restructuring Program of the Detroit Public Schools, Ninth Grade Administrators were asked to select an academic or support program that they found to be successful in their schools. The overall purpose of the restructuring project is to enable the provision of programs, resources, and services that more readily meet the needs of ninth graders. There were 17 programs described from the 6 district school areas. This report, listing programs by area and school, is intended as a way of disseminating descriptions of programs to middle and high schools in the district. In Area A, five high school programs include: a Career Day program; an after-school enrichment program; a math laboratory; a summer enrichment program; and using a ninth-grade counselor and reading/writing consultant. The three programs listed for Area B include: an "Achievers" program to boost student self-esteem; a program designed to increase attendance; and an organizational change into academic clusters for ninth graders. In Area C, administrators reported on a ninth-grade restructuring block program, and a ninth-grade school-within-a-school program. Two high schools in Area D reported on a ninth-grade academic clinic and a mentoring program for students. Three high schools from Area E described an attendance patrol program, an after-school tutoring program, and a parenting program with after-school tutoring. In Area F, the programs cited were: an after-school tutorial with a Saturday component; and an increased guidance and counseling component. Appendixes contain a literature review and a bibliography of 56 sources. (SLD)

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ED 419 866

ACADEMIC AND SUPPPORT NINTH GRADE RESTRUCTURING PROGRAMS

AS REPORTED BY THE NINTH GRADE ADMINISTRATORS

Submitted to:

The Office of Research, Evaluation and Assessment
Detroit Public Schools

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Research and Evaluation Specialists, Inc.

April, 1998

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION 1

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION/NINTH GRADE RESTRUCTURING PROGRAM 1

III. LITERATURE REVIEW 6

IV. ACADEMIC AND SUUPPORT PROGRAMS 7

V. AREA A SCHOOLS AND NAMES OF PROGRAMS 7

- Cass Technical High School : Class of 2001 8
- Chadsey High School : After School Enrichment Program 10
- M.L.King High School : Ninth Grade Restructuring 12
- Murray-Wright High School : Summer Enrichment Institute/ Project "Second Chance" 14
- Western High School : Ninth Grade Counselor and Reading/ Writing Consultant 16

VI. AREA B SCHOOLS AND NAMES OF PROGRAMS 18

- Cody High School : New Age Achievers 19
- Mackenzie High School : Attendance 22
- Northwestern High School : Organizational Change-Academic Clusters 25

VII. AREA C SCHOOLS AND NAMES OF PROGRAMS 28

- Cooley High School : Ninth Grade Restructuring Block 29
- Redford High School : Ninth Grade School-Within-A-School 31

VIII. AREA D SCHOOLS AND NAMES OF PROGRAMS 34

- Mumfurd High School : Ninth Grade Clinic 35
- Northern High School : Male and Girls Mentoring Program 37

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Cont'd)

IX. AREA E SCHOOLS AND NAMES OF PROGRAMS 39

Kettering High School	:	Attendance Patrol 40
Osborn High School	:	After School Tutorial Program 42
Pershing High School	:	Parenting Program/After School Tutoring 44

X. AREA F SCHOOLS AND NAMES OF PROGRAMS 46

Denby High School	:	After School Tutorial/Super Saturday Tutorial and Enrichment 47
Finney High School	:	Increased Guidance and Counseling 50

XI. Appendix 52

A. Literature Review and Bibliography Sources 53

1996-97 NINTH GRADE RESTRUCTURING PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

The Ninth Grade Administrators' survey asked the Ninth Grade Administrators to select an academic or support program which they found to be successful in their school. There were twenty-one programs described.

These programs are listed in this report by area and school. This report is intended as a way of disseminating descriptions of programs to middle and high schools in the district.

It is hoped that this report will be helpful in strengthening programs and starting new programs in schools.

For additional information about these programs, please consult with the Ninth Grade Administrator at the appropriate school.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION[1]

The Ninth Grade Restructuring Task Force recommended to the Detroit Board of Education that a district-wide restructuring plan be initiated that would have impact on every ninth grade student in the District. The unique characteristics of the age group, the typical difficulties with all transition, and the high failure rate in certain key subjects promoted the recommendation that all members of this target population be exposed to at least one of three recommended restructuring options.

The purpose for this district-wide restructuring effort is to enable the provision of programs, resources and services that more readily meet the unique needs of ninth graders. The anticipated results include a substantially lower school dropout rate for the District's ninth graders and assurance that every student who enters the ninth grade graduates from high school.

The specific Task Force recommendations to the Board were as follows:
The District adopt, by the 1995-96 school year, all of the following options which provide more than one avenue for restructuring the ninth grade:

- **Pilot ninth grade in middle schools**
- **Create new, and embellish existing, ninth grade programs for all students (school-within-a-school, accelerated programs, dropout prevention, theme schools, Tech Prep, etc.)**

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[1]**Ninth Grade Restructuring Task Force, Spring, 1995**

- **Establish ninth grade academies for students who are seriously at-risk of dropping out**

Upon accepting the Task Force's recommendations, the Board enjoined each Area to adopt either some or all of the reorganization strategies and to commence immediately with the formulation of implementation plans for restructuring.

The Ninth Grade Restructuring Task Force developed a set of **Guiding Principles** to lend direction to the development of Area plans and assure that they impact all ninth graders. The Task Force recommended all Area plans be developed in the spirit of the Guiding Principles regardless of the chosen option(s). A timeline for the completion of all plans was also determined.

The Guiding Principles included the following categories that were to be addressed in the Areas' restructuring plans:

- target population
- school environment
- student discipline
- staff and instruction
- curriculum
- parents
- life role expectancy
- technology
- physical and mental health and
- continuance

The Task Force was also sub-divided into **Technical Assistance Teams** that would stand ready throughout the development of the Area restructuring plans to troubleshoot, provide resources and assistance. These teams were as follows:

- funding
- planning program design
- support services
- parental involvement
- awareness and dissemination
- curriculum/technology
- staff development and
- evaluation

The membership of the Technical Assistance Teams was expanded to include other individuals in the organization who could lend additional expertise and information. In particular, the *Funding Team* explored funding options and identified those areas in the recommendations that could be addressed with Section 31a at-risk funds. High schools then utilized their school

improvement plans to identify uses for Section 31a funds to address at-risk ninth grade students. Each high school was to receive a Section 31a allocation to help implement part of their ninth grade restructuring plan.

In response to the Board's charge, each Area convened a planning team to undertake the task of developing a ninth grade restructuring plan.

The **target population** was defined by the Task Force to include all ninth graders and/or "students who are fourteen or more years of age who are classified as ninth graders or less."

While the planning logistics varied somewhat from Area to Area, the common charge from the Board, commonly agreed upon process criteria and goals, yielded a set of Area plans that together represent a cohesive, **District-wide Ninth Grade Restructuring Plan**.

Detroit's Ensuing Ninth Grade Restructuring Plan (1995-96)

While three restructuring options were possible, all Areas chose the same option:

- **Create new, and embellish existing, ninth grade programs for all students (school-within-a-school, accelerated programs, dropout prevention, theme schools, Tech. Prep., etc.)**

Formation of Planning Teams

Each Area convened a meeting with representatives from each of its high schools to participate in the planning. Some areas included middle school representation, parents, vocational technical centers and other stakeholders.

Formation of Mission, Vision and Goals

Based on the District's Strategic Plan, each Area developed a mission statement. The mission statements were supported by vision and goal statements that clearly set directions to the components of the plans. All plans contained specific enabling objectives or activities that would be carried out in order to achieve the stated goals.

Identification and Assessment

All plans contained provision for the **identification** of members of the target population who are **most at-risk** of dropping out of school and most in need of intervention programs and activities, particularly before they enter high school.

Identification included eighth grade assessment of students who were to enter Grade 9 in fall, 1995. All plans included the development of **Individual Learning Plans (ILP)** for students based on the results of this assessment.

Restructuring Strategies

All plans detailed specific restructuring strategies for more readily meeting the unique needs of the target population. The plans reflected the review of literature, informed practice and developed knowledge about instructional practices and restructuring models.

Restructuring efforts are to range from creating a distinct school-within-a-school, to facilitating block scheduling, common teacher prep periods and planning time, from distinct dismissal and arrival times, to separate locations, reorganization of course offerings and smaller learning units.

Curriculum is to be augmented to include Tech Prep and School-to-Work components such as job shadowing, hands on, practicums, etc.

All new ninth graders are to be exposed to an intensive orientation prior to entering ninth grade or during the first few weeks of school.

Support Services

The middle school and ninth grade assessment instruments also provide information as to the type of support services necessary to accomplish the missions and goals as defined. All plans contain an array of options and support services ranging from mentors, tutorial programs, and peer support programs, to career counseling, social work services, health services, etc.

Parents

Avenues for the meaningful involvement, support and participation of parents are an intricate part of each plan.

Identification of Staff Requirements

All plans contain reorganization descriptions that address the need to provide the target population with sufficient, well-trained teachers and other support staff. Nearly all high schools l added one additional assistant principal whose sole administrative responsibility will be the ninth grade school-within-a-school.

All high schools articulated the need for additional teachers. Some added social workers, counselors, psychiatrists, attendance officers, teacher coordinators, instructional specialists, educational technicians and others.

Staff at all schools participated in professional development and other training as identified by individual planning teams. Most staff training will focus on upgrading the instructional skills of staff. Many plans include training that will equip all involved staff with strategies and information that will enable them to become effective, knowledgeable and caring adults.

Identification of Renovations or Facility Needs

Some plans include the renovation of certain areas of buildings to accommodate the school-within-a-school and smaller learning units. All plans include the provision to infuse technology into the learning process which automatically will require facility renovations and upgrades.

Technology

Many plans include extensive utilization of technology ranging from personal computers for each student to enable distance learning and other computer assisted activities, to technology wings that will facilitate hands on experiences in technology careers as well as daily learning.

All plans include provision for Vocational and Technical Education as well as experiences that will relate education to the real world of work. Such programs as School-to-Work and Tech Prep are integral parts of some plans.

Evaluation and Assessment

All plans use the student achievement criteria articulated in the Strategic Plan. The goals for MAT, attendance, dropout rate, etc., set forth in this document will be a part of all evaluations.

Leadership

All plans are under the leadership of the respective Area Superintendents who are to assure that implementation efforts address the goal to maintain ninth grade students in school until graduation.

Allowable Costs

Costs payable with Section 31a funds are limited to the following:

- salaries and benefits for instructional staff
- salaries and benefits for staff providing direct non-instructional services such as: medical, counseling, social work services
- purchased services, supplies and materials for instructional and direct non-instructional services
- operation, maintenance, and pupil transportation costs for programs provided outside of the regular school day or year; (transportation for field trips is allowable.)
- capital outlay necessary for the provision of instructional and direct non-instructional services such as computers and other non-instructional equipment

- procedures for involving parents in direct instructional and non-instructional activities with their children

The following pages present a review of the literature related to school restructuring at the high school level. After the literature review, an evaluation of the 1995-96 Ninth Grade Restructuring Program based on staff and student perceptions is presented. This report represents just one part of the total project evaluation. Additional reports in this series are available from the Office of Research, Evaluation and Testing.

LITERATURE REVIEW[2]

A literature review was conducted as part of the 1995-96 Ninth Grade Restructuring Program evaluation. The purpose of the literature review is to identify characteristics of effective dropout prevention programs. The Literature Review is located in Appendix A.

[2]See Bibliography Sources in Appendix A. ERIC search abstracts were used for some of the data.

ACADEMIC AND SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Area A

A.	Cass Technical High School	:	Career Day
B.	Chadsey High School	:	After School Enrichment Program
C.	M.L. King High School	:	Math Laboratory
D.	Murray-Wright High School	:	Summer Enrichment Institute/Project "Second Chance"
E.	Western High School	:	Ninth Grade Counselor and Reading/Writing Consultant

A. CAREER DAY
(Cass Technical High School)

Need

Describe the needs which substantiate the use of this program.

Many students have not identified a career goal and had no idea what jobs were aligned with their interests. Students are not motivated to make positive choices which will increase their chances of academic success and prepare them for the world of work.

Objective(s)

State the objective(s) in terms of the amount of improvement for each need.

To provide an opportunity for students to gain information regarding career paths and to identify a personal career goal. To motivate students to develop and strengthen decision making, and critical thinking skills which will enhance success now in preparation for the world of work.

Program Description

Please clearly describe the operation of this program. Please emphasize what will be different for the students and teachers.

Fifteen guest speakers from business, education, legal and technical career fields spoke to at least 3 different classes regarding their careers. This included educational preparation, applying for and getting a job, work habits, salaries, etc. Each speaker related life work experiences to positive behaviors in school including good attendance, good grades, work ethics, personal responsibility and good citizenship. Students, parents and staff benefited from this experience. Students were better able to identify career choices and develop interest in making more positive decisions.

Staffing

Please indicate the number and classification of the staff needed to implement this program, e.g., teachers, counselors, educational technicians, student assistants, etc.

The ninth grade executive board, ninth grade sponsor, staff and parent volunteers assisted with the implementation of this activity.

Evaluation

Please describe what data you will use to determine whether or not your objective(s) have been met.

Most of the students, staff, parents and guest participants responded to evaluation questions in a positive manner and encouraged us to continue this annual activity.

Professional Development

Please describe the in-service training you provided in terms of content, time to be allotted, and, if known, the trainers.

Students were given a pre-career day interest inventory to complete. Teachers introduced or strengthened career concepts and related information via American Careers magazine articles. Information regarding preparation and content was reinforced on a weekly basis via weekly bulletin, PA announcements and flyers.

B. AFTER SCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM
(Chadsey High School)

Need

Describe the needs which substantiate the use of this program.

The After School Enrichment Program is a tutorial program which is designed to assist students who may require additional instruction to increase academic achievement. Ninth grade students enter at various levels of academic achievement. This program is designed to raise the level of academic achievement and provide individual instruction to enable all ninth grade students the opportunity to succeed.

Objective(s)

State the objective(s) in terms of the amount of improvement for each need.

- Students will improve academic achievement
- Students will improve daily attendance
- Students will attain good interpersonal skills
- Students will successfully complete ninth grade requirements

Program Description

Please clearly describe the operation of this program. Please emphasize what will be different for the students and teachers.

The tutorial program is an extension of the school day. It is supported by parents, students, and staff to ensure academic success of the ninth grade students. Classes are offered in mathematics, English, science, and social studies. Students may select up to two classes per day, four days per week. Students receive individualized instruction and supplemental assistance with classroom assignments. Classes are smaller and the setting is more informal. Students have more opportunities to bond with the teachers.

Staffing

Please indicate the number and classification of the staff needed to implement this program, e.g., teachers, counselors, educational technicians, student assistants, etc.

- English (2)
- Social Studies (2)
- Science (2)
- Educational Technician
- Mathematics (3)

Evaluation

Please describe what data you will use to determine whether or not your objective(s) have been met.

- Report Cards
- Attendance Print-Outs
- Failure list
- MAT Scores
- Suspension list

Professional Development

Please describe the in-service training you provided in terms of content, time to be allotted, and, if known, the trainers.

- Critical Friends In-service - monthly meeting
- Consultant
- Professional Development Academy

C. MATH LABORATORY
(M.L. King High School)

Need

Describe the needs which substantiate the use of this program.

Ninth graders who were not successful in Algebra I classes were recommended for the math laboratory. Students were enrolled in Algebra I with the specialist. The specialist was able to provide individual assistance to those students.

Objective(s)

State the objective(s) in terms of the amount of improvement for each need.

The objective was to assist students in mastering skills necessary to complete Algebra I requirements.

Program Description

Please clearly describe the operation of this program. Please emphasize what will be different for the students and teachers.

Approximately ten to fifteen students are enrolled in each class. Along with the teacher providing individualized instruction, computers are also available for student use.

Staffing

Please indicate the number and classification of the staff needed to implement this program, e.g., teachers, counselors, educational technicians, student assistants, etc.

The math specialist and the ninth grade counselor assisted the students.

Evaluation

Please describe what data you will use to determine whether or not your objective(s) have been met.

Evaluation is determined by data which reflect number of students passing Algebra I.

Professional Development

Please describe the in-service training you provided in terms of content, time to be allotted, and, if known, the trainers.

The ninth grade administrator, math specialist and ninth grade counselor informed staff of the objectives and the on-going services of the math specialist.

D. SUMMER ENRICHMENT INSTITUTE/PROJECT "SECOND CHANCE" (Murray-Wright High School)

Need

Describe the needs which substantiate the use of this program.

Incoming ninth graders need to be introduced to high school prior to the fall in order to smooth the transition from middle school.

Ninth and tenth graders who fall behind get extra time to get back on track during the summer.

Objective(s)

State the objective(s) in terms of the amount of improvement for each need.

All students enrolling in the summer program will be introduced to study skills and human relations strategies that will make their first year in high school relatively free of the trauma associated with entering a new environment.

Students needing a second chance to pass core curriculum courses will be given the opportunity in summer school free of charge.

Program Description

Please clearly describe the operation of this program. Please emphasize what will be different for the students and teachers.

The Summer Enrichment Institute is two dimensional. The first is the Freshman Academy which introduces the high school curriculum in a more relaxed atmosphere. The focus is on study skills, time management and interpersonal relations.

The second dimension is "Project Second Chance" which provides students who failed English, math social studies, and/or science another chance to pass with less stress and more individualized attention.

Staffing

Please indicate the number and classification of the staff needed to implement this program, e.g., teachers, counselors, educational technicians, student assistants, etc.

- teachers (12)
- counselor (1)
- educational technician (1)
- administrators (2)
- student assistants (4)
- school service assistant

Evaluation

Please describe what data you will use to determine whether or not your objective(s) have been met.

- Report cards
- Number of students retained at Murray-Wright
- Number of students passing all classes
- Number of Student Code of Conduct violations
- Number of parental contacts

Professional Development

Please describe the in-service training you provided in terms of content, time to be allotted, and, if known, the trainers.

Content:

- Reading and writing across the curriculum - Three 2 hour workshops
- Teaching the 'Whole' child to increase self-esteem - One 2 hour workshops

E. NINTH GRADE COUNSELOR AND READING/WRITING CONSULTANT (Western High School)

Need

Describe the needs which substantiate the use of this program.

A counselor was needed because of:

- Excessive truancy
- Fights and threats of violence
- Poor academic/skills

The Reading/Writing teacher consultant was needed to:

- Improve student writing across disciplines
- Increase student participation in communication arts contests

Objective(s)

State the objective(s) in terms of the amount of improvement for each need.

There will be a three percent decrease in student suspensions and administrative transfers.

Program Description

Please clearly describe the operation of this program. Please emphasize what will be different for the students and teachers.

A counselor will:

- Handle referrals from Dean of Students, other counselors and the 9th grade Assistant Principal
- Conduct group counseling sessions with 'most at-risk students' (average 15 weekly)
- Facilitate 9th grade participation programs designed to offer support, i.e., Wayne County Sheriff's Juvenile Reality Tour, Project REACH (Career Awareness) Project POWER (Hutzel Hospital Health Awareness Issues)
- Identify and place students in after school tutoring program

The Reading/Writing teacher consultant will:

- Work in class with English teachers
- Pull out 10 - 15 students
- Conduct departmental workshops (English, Social Studies and Science)

Staffing

Please indicate the number and classification of the staff needed to implement this program, e.g., teachers, counselors, educational technicians, student assistants, etc.

- 1 - 9th grade improvement counselor
- 1 - Reading/Writing Teacher (consultant)

Evaluation

Please describe what data you will use to determine whether or not your objective(s) have been met.

- Attendance and grade point average data for specific/targeted students
- Detroit Public Schools Student Code of Conduct roster of infractions
- MAT 7 test results (reading only)
- Final card marking comparisons (English, Social Studies and Science)
- Student self reports/evaluations/surveys

Professional Development

Please describe the in-service training you provided in terms of content, time to be allotted, and, if known, the trainers.

CAMET in-service was (10 hrs.) given to help instructors analyze learning styles (strengths/weaknesses) of their students.

Mini demonstration of EEEI's 'active participation' given to the entire staff.

Departmental Workshops: Social Studies (5 hrs.) and Science (1 hr.)

Area B

A.	Cody High School	:	New Age Achievers
B.	Mackenzie High School	:	Attendance
C.	Northwestern High School	:	Organizational Change-Academic Clusters

A. NEW AGE ACHIEVERS
(Cody High School)

Need

Describe the needs which substantiate the use of this program.

- Improve students' self-esteem
- Improve students' attitude towards learning
- Improve students' attendance
- Improve students' ability to work cooperatively in a team setting

Objective

State the objective(s) in terms of the amount of improvement for each need.

1) By the end of the 1996-97 school year, the percentage of students' self-esteem will increase by 2 percent.

2) By the end of the 1996-97 school year, students' attitude towards learning will increase.

3) By the end of the 1996-97 school year, students' attendance will increase by 10 percent from the previous school year.

4) By the end of the 1996-97 school year, students' ability to work cooperatively in a team setting will increase by 5 percent.

Program Description

Please clearly describe the operation of this program. Please emphasize what will be different for the students and teachers.

Cody High School used a 'school-within-a-school' approach to restructuring the ninth grade in addition to physically separating ninth grade students from the upper classmen.

Teachers planned by describing what approach, what chapters, etc. would be explored. Teachers also planned related out of the classroom learning.

Students, on the other hand, received instruction in a variety of ways: The cooperative learning approach, individual learning and student driven instruction.

Staffing

Please indicate the number and classification of the staff needed to implement this program, e.g., teachers, counselors, educational technicians, student assistants, etc.

Teachers (0)

Counselors (0)

Student Assistant (Co-op) (1)

Educational Technician (3)
Currently we employed one.

Two additional technicians are needed for in-school mathematics/reading assistance for the students.

Evaluation

Please describe what data you will use to determine whether or not your objective(s) have been met.

Comparison of MAT7 results in 1996 with MAT7 results in 1997

Attendance profile

Self-esteem survey

Career options survey

Final grades - (second and fourth card markings)

Classroom projects to measure students' use of critical thinking skills, problem solving techniques and the use of tools of technology.

Professional Development

Please describe the in-service training you provided in terms of content, time to be allotted, and, if known, the trainers.

'The After Effects: Retentions, Elections and Additions'
June 2-4, 1997
Consultants: Belinda J. Raines and Vivian A. Palmer

'Been There Done That... Alternative Means to Handeling Minor Infractions of Student Code'
April 14 & 16, 1997
Consultants: Belinda J. Raines and Vivian A. Palmer

'Giving Students A Better Chance to Succeed'
April 24, 28 & 29, 1997
Consultants: Belinda J. Raines and Vivian A. Palmer

'Moving Towards the Year 2000'
April 18 & 19, 1997
Consultants: Casandra Allen, Carol Asman, Veda Bryant, Dilagene Davis, Derek Faulk, Michael Laramee, Vivian Palmer, and Clark Wilson

'Service Learning: What Is It? Why Do It? How to Interpret it into the Curriculum'
October 22 & 24, 1996
Consultants: Belinda J. Raines and Vivian A. Palmer

'Where Do We Go From Here?'
August 19-23, 1996
Consultants: Belinda J. Raines

'Service Learning - Part II'
November 19, 21, 22 & 26, 1997
Consultants: Belinda J. Raines and Vivian A. Palmer

'Where Do We Go From Here?' - Part II
September 24, 26, 1997 and October 1, 3, 1997
Consultants: Belinda J. Raines and Vivian A Palmer

B. ATTENDANCE
(Mackenzie High School)

Need

Describe the needs which substantiate the use of this program.

- The drop-out rate needs to decrease.
- Violations of the Student Code of Conduct must decrease.
- Student attendance must improve.
- Parental involvement must be increased.
- Student achievement is inextricably linked to student attendance.
- The graduation rate needs to be expanded.

Objective(s)

State the objective(s) in terms of the amount of improvement for each need.

- The drop-out rate will decrease by 2 percent.
- Violations of the Student Code of Conduct will decrease by 5 percent.
- The number of behavior referrals to administrators will decrease by 5 percent.
- Student attendance in all classes will improve by 5 percent.
- Student skipping of selective classes will decrease by 5 percent.

Program Description

Please clearly describe the operation of this program. Please emphasize what will be different for the students and teachers.

- Conferences were held with students and their parents.
- Parents were called on a daily basis if their son or daughter was absent from school or a class.

- All students were given a daily progress report which had to be returned to her office at the end of each school day.

- Students were referred to an administrator for conferences and/or necessary suspensions.

- Classes were visited on a random basis to verify if a particular student was in class. By random I mean students were not aware of a plan but were checked every period, every other period, twice daily, or whatever combination was deemed sufficient to help students modify their negative attendance patterns.

- Group counseling sessions were held with at-risk students.

- Incentives were given to students with improved attendance. For example, certificates were given for improved attendance.

- Relationships with parents were developed centering, of course, around the attendance patterns of students.

- Referrals were made to counselors and our social worker when home, family, or personal problems were discovered.

- The agent also provided material relief for students using a Family Data Form in the form of clothing, eyeglasses, repair of hearing aids, and the investigation of possible Goodfellow packages.

- Court cases were initiated for the extremely hard-core cases were our efforts to be stymied.

- General counseling sessions were conducted with some students.

- Efforts were made to secure part-time employment for needy students.

Staffing

Please indicate the number and classification of the staff needed to implement this program, e.g., teachers, counselors, educational technicians, student assistants, etc.

Assistant principal (1)	Counselors (4)
Attendance agent (1)	Administrators (10)
Teachers (32)	Dean of Students (1)

Evaluation

Please describe what data you will use to determine whether or not your objective(s) have been met.

To determine the extent that our objectives have been met we will make use of the following data:

- Teacher attendance records
- Report cards
- Personal evaluations by teachers
- Information from Central office about the drop-out rate
- Records from the office of the attendance agent
- Weekly attendance profiles

Professional Development

Please describe the in-service training you provided in terms of content, time to be allotted, and if know, the trainers.

In-service was provided in the following manner:

- The attendance agent attended workshops conducted by our Central Office designed to keep agents abreast of the details, trends, and operations of the Attendance Department.
- Mr. Otis Gilchrist and Mr. George Moore of the Area B Attendance Department in-serviced our agent.
- Our attendance agent visited other high schools to study the attendance models they had developed. For example, she visited Cody High School.
- Our attendance agent met with all staff and informed them of her function and role.
- The assistant principal in charge of the program allotted time at every staff meeting for our agent to discuss attendance problems with teachers.

C. ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE ACADEMIC CLUSTERS
(Northwestern High School)

Need

Describe the needs which substantiate the use of this program.

- A school pattern of high student dropout between ninth and tenth grade.
- High absenteeism and in-school truancies among ninth and tenth grade students.
- Low classroom performance and participation as measured by GPA, course credits and standardized test results.
- The need to develop a sense of belonging and community among ninth graders who have an increased desire for friendships and social interactions.
- Increase in incidents of school violence attributed to 'gang activity.'
- The need to connect/link classroom learning and the 'world of work.'

Objective(s)

State the objective(s) in terms of the amount of improvement for each need.

- Increase to 100 percent, the number of incoming ninth graders assigned to a four year plan-of-work with career/job related orientation.
- The daily attendance rate of 1996-97 ninth graders will increase by 5 percent, when compared to 1995-96 ninth graders.
- The academic achievement of 1996-97 ninth graders, as measured by GPA and course credits will increase by 3 percentage points when compared to 1995-96 ninth graders.
- The retention rate of ninth graders moving from ninth to tenth grade will be 95 percent or higher.

Program Description

Please clearly describe the operation of this program. Please emphasize what will be different for the students and teachers.

The selection of a sound academic program is essential to achievement and success in high school. Academic programs provide students the opportunity to develop individual interest/talents and acquire the foundational skills necessary for programs in higher education or entry into the world of work. Academics also guide students in planning their four year plan-of-work and selecting appropriate courses in academic areas.

Over the past seven years, the science and mathematics staff at Northwestern has successfully implemented a school-of-choice academic program in science and mathematics (STAMP). The design was a developmental model that stressed: 1) the strong relationship between effort and achievement; 2) four years of rigorous academics; and 3) a 'school-within-a-school' organizational structure for building a sense of community. Data from the program has shown that students enrolled in the program improved significantly in all areas of the curriculum. This can be evidenced by the high retention/graduation rate of STAMP students since its inception.

One of the goals of the 1996-97 Ninth Grade Action Plan was to create an organizational structure similar to the STAMP model that would encompass all incoming ninth graders. Three distinct academic clusters were formed in related curriculum areas. Within each cluster, there were four-year plans to guide the growth and development of students in the selected areas. The selection of a cluster was based on career aspirations, college/technical school admissions requirements, and workplace skills for the 21st century.

Staffing

Please indicate the number and classification of the staff needed to implement this program, e.g., teachers, counselors, educational technicians, student assistants, etc.

Classification	Number
Teachers	
English (one per cluster)	3
Mathematics (one per cluster)	3
Science Teachers (one per cluster)	3
Social Studies (one per cluster)	3
Counselor	1
Attendance Officer	1
Educational Technician	1
Service Assistants	2

Evaluation

Please describe what data you will use to determine whether or not your objective(s) have been met.

- Number and names of students enrolled in the 10th grade year clusters
- Attendance reports generated from the computer and directly from teachers
- List of students participating in opportunities/competitions related to the cluster area
- Grade point average for each card marking period
- Standardized test scores (MAT7 and HSPT)

Professional Development

Please describe the in-service training you provided in terms of content, time to be allotted, and, if known, the trainers.

Ongoing Professional Development Sessions:

Ninth Grade Support Team - Composed of ninth grade assistant principal, counselor, social worker, attendance agent and educational technician met on a weekly basis (9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.) to plan and monitor intervention strategies for students most at-risk.

Ninth Grade Restructuring Leadership Team - Composed of 9th and 10th grade class coordinators, and assistant principal and a ninth grade teacher from each cluster met on monthly basis (7:00-8:00 a.m.) to plan activities and disseminate information to total staff.

General Staff Meeting - At least one staff meeting per month is devoted to in-service activities coordinated by school achievement committee. Ninth Grade Restructuring is one of the sub-committees in the school improvement plan.

Area C

A. Cooley High School : Ninth Grade Restructuring Block

B. Redford High School : Ninth Grade School-Within-A-School

A. NINTH GRADE RESTRUCTURING BLOCK
(Cooley High School)

Need

Describe the needs which substantiate the use of this program.

Test scores in the areas of math and English are very low for the school. Also, this school is unaccredited by the State and we are working to reach summary accreditation.

Objective(s)

State the objective(s) in terms of the amount of improvement for each need.

MEAP/HSPT test scores will improve to the point that current ninth grade students will score sixty-six percent when tested.

Program Description

Please clearly describe the operation of this program. Please emphasize what will be different for the students and teachers.

More time on-task – English and algebra classes are paired and classes meet for sixty-five minutes instead of the normal fifty. Classes are located adjacent to one another and there is no five minute break for class passing.

Staffing

Please indicate the number and classification of the staff needed to implement this program, e.g., teachers, counselors, educational technicians, student assistants, etc.

This program requires enough English and algebra teachers to service the number of ninth graders. We used existing staff for our program.

Evaluation

Please describe what data you will use to determine whether or not your objective(s) have been met.

- MEAP test scores
- HSPT test scores
- Report cards

Professional Development

Please describe the in-service training you provided in terms of content, time to be allotted, and, if known, the trainers.

Teachers were involved in extensive staff development activities which included the following:

• Testing strategies – 3 ½ hrs.	English Department
• Conflict Resolution – 3 ½ hrs.	Guidance Department
• TRUE COLORS – 3 ½ HRS.	Outside consultant
• Cooperative learning – 14 hrs. (4 sessions)	
• Using computers – 3 ½ hrs.	Business Department
• School Improvement Plan – 7 hrs.	Wayne County RESA
• Hands-On Teaching – 7 hrs.	Alternative Education Department

B. NINTH GRADE SCHOOL-WITHIN-A-SCHOOL PROGRAM
(Redford High School)

Need

Describe the needs which substantiate the use of this program.

The Ninth Grade School-Within-a-School Program was developed to address the following needs and areas of concern for our ninth grade population:

- poor academic performance
- poor standardized test scores
- poor attendance
- violation of Student Code of Conduct

Objective(s)

State the objective(s) in terms of the amount of improvement for each need.

Objective 1 - By June, 1996, the percentage of students attaining Category 3 status on the MEAP reading test will increase from 11 percent to 15 percent.

Objective 2 - By June, 1996, the percentage of students attaining Category 4 status on the MEAP mathematics test will increase from 1 percent to 10 percent.

Program Description

Please clearly describe the operation of this program. Please emphasize what will be different for the students and teachers.

The Ninth Grade School-Within-a-School Program was designed to reduce the drop out rate among our ninth grade population. Approximately 150 randomly selected ninth graders are currently enrolled in our School-Within-a-School Project. As with all ninth grade students, these students are housed on the second floor of the Cook Building where they are divided into four teams of 25-30 students. There are four teams of teachers who have the same four teams of students rotated to them everyday (Block Scheduling). The School-Within-a-School concept provides the academic teachers an opportunity to meet during their common preparation periods and to participate in the team teaching process, as desired, in order to plan, develop strategies, and evaluate their student's progress. The eighth grade assessment sheets were also made available to ninth grade teachers to review past academic performance at the middle school level.

The experimental group of 150 ninth graders participated in the following support services:

- Conflict Resolution Program
- Male/Female Responsibility Program
- Summer School Bridging Program
- Student of the Month Program
- Ninth Grade Computer Laboratory
- After School Tutorial Program
- Ninth Grade Newsletter
- Motivational assemblies

Staffing

Please indicate the number and classification of the staff needed to implement this program, e.g., teachers, counselors, educational technicians, student assistants, etc.

Classification	Number
Administrator (assistant principal)	1
Counselor	1
Social worker	1
Psychologist	1
Attendance agent	1
English teachers	4
Social studies teachers	4
Mathematics teachers	4
Science teachers	4
Secretary	1
Computer technician	1

Evaluation

Please describe what data you will use to determine whether or not your objective(s) have been met.

- Standardized test scores
- Reduction in number of student code violations
- Report cares
- Parent/teacher conferences
- Attendance

Professional Development

Please describe the in-service training you provided in terms of content, time to be allotted, and if know, the trainers.

Five hours of staff development activities were conducted in one-hour departmental meetings on Wednesdays, covering the following curriculum concerns:

- Curriculum
- Understanding Authentic Assessment Measures
- Development of Affective Strategies

Area D

A.	Mumford High School	:	Ninth Grade Academic Clinic
B.	Northern High School	:	Male And Girls Mentoring Program

A. NINTH GRADE CLINIC
(Mumford High School)

Need

Describe the needs which substantiate the use of this program.

Many students failed their first semester class because of their inability to adjust to high school. This program is giving them a second chance in a smaller setting. It will also help students to improve their attendance.

Objective(s)

State the objective(s) in terms of the amount of improvement for each need.

Students who have failed Algebra I, U.S. History I and/or English I will be given a chance to pass these classes. Each student must also take a study skills class. Class size will be no more than 15 students.

Program Description

Please clearly describe the operation of this program. Please emphasize what will be different for the students and teachers.

All students will take the study skill class the first period of the day.

Students will only be allowed two absences for the entire program.

Students are charged $55 per class, to be refunded if they earn a grade of "C" or better.

Students who can not pay may enroll on scholarship.

Students earn 5 hours credit for all classes except study skills.

All students will be tested to see where they are. Students will work at their own pace to reach a desired proficiency.

Staffing

Please indicate the number and classification of the staff needed to implement this program, e.g., teachers, counselors, educational technicians, student assistants, etc.

Classification	Number
Administrator	1
Teachers	4
Counselor	1
Secretary	1

Evaluation

Please describe what data you will use to determine whether or not your objective(s) have been met.

The data to be used is the number of students who successfully complete their classes with a grade of "C" or better.

Professional Development

Please describe the in-service training you provided in terms of content, time to be allotted, and, if known, the trainers.

Workshop on Discipline concerns and how to prevent, stop and/or handle them. This was a 2 ½ hour workshop that I did using a book called Discipline in the Secondary School.

The High-Performing Teacher, Sharon Lockett, was the consultant for this 3 hour workshop. She offered suggestions from Lee Carter on how to avoid burnout and increase your motivation.

B. MALE AND GIRLS MENTORING PROGRAMS
(Northern High School)

Need

Describe the needs which substantiate the use of this program.

Lack of positive role model in the student's home; i.e., father and/or mother.

Academic, personal and social support - tutoring/mentoring

Need to provide wholesome activities for students with mentors for bonding and nurturing purposes.

Objective(s)

State the objective(s) in terms of the amount of improvement for each need.

Given activities, volunteers will participate with the ninth grade male and female students for personal, academic, and social support.

Given academic tutoring, students will improve in subject areas for scholarship and academic success.

Given counseling and mentoring, students will be nurtured and supported toward solving their personal and social problems.

Program Description

Please clearly describe the operation of this program. Please emphasize what will be different for the students and teachers.

The ninth grade team developed and organized the ninth grade activities with the administrator serving as the facilitator to the process. Teacher in-service was provided on 'Teaming' and other instructional strategies. Academic tutoring by the teachers and mentoring (volunteers) were on-going. Other activities (with evaluation) are:

> Ninth Grade summer Institute, Student Orientations; Parent orientation and Open House; Student Motivational Assemblies; Peer mediation/Counseling, Parent, Health, Compact, Teen and Specialized Staff Support; 'Parents, Bring Your Child to School Day;' Neighborhood Services Support and Ninth Grade Awards Program.

Staffing

Please indicate the number and classification of the staff needed to implement this program, e.g., teachers, counselors, educational technicians, student assistants, etc.

Classification	Number
Administrator	1
Teachers	31
Counselor	1
Educational technician	5
Student assistants	2
Attendance agent	1
Social worker	1

Evaluation

Please describe what data you will use to determine whether or not your objective(s) have been met.

- Student information system
- Ninth grade restructuring activity and support evaluation
- Verbal feedback from staff, students and parents
- Other district data (DPS)

The purpose of the 9th and 10th Grade Teaming Workshop is to assist teachers in coming together to develop interdisciplinary instructional and other strategies for student success. The focus was how to deliver instruction utilizing 'Block Scheduling,' 'Teaming,' 'Interdisciplinary Learning,' and other strategies. Managing blocks of time and how to allocate time are key ingredients that were discussed for the purpose of engaging students in meaningful activity. Teachers must share time, have time to collaborate and plan together in order for the block initiative to be successful.

Teaming Consultants:

Dr. Henry Meares, University of Michigan
Dr. Harvey Dorrah, Central Michigan University

Teacher In-service Schedule:

August 28, 1996
May 14, 1997
June 10th and 11th, 1997
Culminating workshop on Block Scheduling/Teaming and other instructional strategies

Area E

A.	Kettering High School:	Attendance Patrol
B.	Osborn High School :	After School Tutoring Program
C.	Pershing High School:	Parenting Program/After School Tutoring

A. ATTENDANCE PATROL
(Kettering High School)

Need

Describe the needs which substantiate the use of this program.

The needs to substantiate the attendance patrol program became evident after the first card marking. The report cards indicated that one hundred and twelve (112) students had severe academic and attendance problems; 20 days or more absence and had failed three or more classes. A plan was developed so that their attendance and grades would be monitored on a daily basis by the teachers, a parent/volunteer, and a attendance agent.

Objective

State the objective(s) in terms of the amount of improvement for each need.

Student attendance and grades will improve by 25 percent.

Program Description

Please clearly describe the operation of this program. Please emphasize what will be different for the students and teachers.

The attendance patrol program is designed to provide continuous monitoring of twenty-five students during a ten-week cycle. Students who have been identified as At-Risk must complete the following activities:

- Student and parents are invited in for a parental conference regarding attendance and grades. A plan of action is developed at this time.
- Students are placed in group counseling for ten-weeks with the social worker and counselor.
- During these ten-weeks classes are being monitored on an hourly basis.
- Every Friday students who have gone to all classes for that week a 'Good News' phone call is made to the students home in the classroom.
- Students must attend after school tutoring for ten-weeks. The difference for students and teachers is that this program requires monitoring on an hourly basis with daily communication to the student's home.

Staffing

Please indicate the number and classification of the staff needed to implement this program, e.g., teachers, counselors, educational technicians, student assistants, etc.

Classification	Number
Teachers	28
Counselors	2
Parent volunteer	1
Assistant principal	1
Attendance agent	1

Evaluation

Please describe what data you will use to determine whether or not your objective(s) have been met.

Students' attendance and grades are used to determine whether or not the objective was met.

Professional Development

Please describe the in-service training you provided in terms of content, time to be allotted, and, if known, the trainers.

The following in-services were provided:

Academic innovations
Images is Everything
Brain Based Strategies
Math, science and English in-service via area curriculum specialist
Critical thinking that empowers us to choose non-violent life skills. Julia Davis, Trainer
Project Driven Classes School Craft College
Writing Across the curriculum Area E

B. AFTER SCHOOL TUTORIAL PROGRAM
(Osborn High School)

Need

Describe the needs which substantiate the use of this program.

- Students low reading and mathematics scores from middle school who need assistance.
- Students who fall behind in their academic work because of poor time-management skills.
- Students who fall behind in their academic work because of their attendance.
- Students who fall behind in their work because of school code violations.

Objective(s)

State the objective(s) in terms of the amount of improvement for each need.

- To provide an opportunity for students to improve reading and mathematics test scores by at least one (1) grade level during the year.

- To provide an opportunity for students to obtain assistance in reading/writing, mathematics, and science.

- Provide an opportunity for students to receive academic assistance when they are away from school for an extended period of time.

- Provide an opportunity for students to share with other students their academic, social, and psychological development.

Program Description

Please clearly describe the operation of this program. Please emphasize what will be different for the students and teachers.

The After School Tutorial Program will give students an opportunity to receive assistance in their academic development. Tutorial assistance will be offered in the following academic areas: mathematics, English, reading and science. The after school program will begin at 3:35 p.m. and will end at 5:00 p.m. Students will participate in the after school program in a number of ways:

- volunteer
- parent referral
- teacher referral

- administrative assignments

Teachers will be assigned to these tutorial centers along with students who will assist in the tutorial progress. Additionally, parents have an opportunity to attend the tutorial session with the student. This will enable the parent to assist in the tutorial process beyond school.

Staffing

Please indicate the number and classification of the staff needed to implement this program, e.g., teachers, counselors, educational technicians, student assistants, etc.

Three teachers – mathematics, English, social studies
Along with peer tutors (volunteers)

Evaluation

Please describe what data you will use to determine whether or not your objective(s) have been met.

The following barometers will be used to measure the effectiveness of our program.

- Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT)
- Earned academic credit
- Grade Point Average (GPA)
- Attendance
- Parent Involvement
- Internal Evaluation Instrument

Professional Development

Please describe the in-service training you provided in terms of content, time to be allotted, and if know, the trainers.

Critical Thinking Skills	Dr. Julia R. Davis
Learning Theory In-Service	Dr. Joan Neurott
Framing The Future	
Building Leadership Skills	Ms. Ada Badger
Assessment Alignment with High School Proficiency Test (HSPT)	
Improving Your Teaching Strategies In Mathematics	Mr. Marvin Weingarden
Staff Development	Administrative
	Organizational Plan

C. PARENTING PROGRAM/AFTER SCHOOL TUTORING
(Pershing High School)

Need

Describe the needs which substantiate the use of this program.

To help parents face the difficult task of raising self-disciplined and responsible teenagers.

There is a need to provide professional tutoring and homework assistance.

Objective(s)

State the objective(s) in terms of the amount of improvement for each need.

Parents are reminded of this immense influence they have with their teenagers, that they are their most important role models. Parents will be counseled in how to foster responsibility in their teenagers.

Provide an on ongoing basis professional tutoring and homework assistance.

Program Description

Please clearly describe the operation of this program. Please emphasize what will be different for the students and teachers.

This is a ten-week parenting workshop with weekly meetings. Parents are educated, counseled and are allowed time for questions and discussion. Also referrals are made for services outside the school environment.

Tutoring and homework assistance is offered in math, science and English on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. weekly.

Staffing

Please indicate the number and classification of the staff needed to implement this program, e.g., teachers, counselors, educational technicians, student assistants, etc.

Parenting program: school social worker

Tutoring programs: administrator (1)
counselor (1)
secretary (1)
classroom teachers (3)

Evaluation

Please describe what data you will use to determine whether or not your objective(s) have been met.

- Ongoing student records
- Follow-up conferences
- Student surveys
- Improved GPA and test scores

Area F

A.	Denby High School	:	After School Tutorial/Super Saturday Tutorial and Enrichment
B.	Finney High School	:	Increased Guidance and Counseling

A. AFTER SCHOOL TUTORIAL/SUPER SATURDAY TUTORIAL AND ENRICHMENT (Denby High School))

Need

Describe the needs which substantiate the use of this program.

Evaluation of student performance after the first card marking period indicated a number of 9th graders who were experiencing not only academic difficulties but also serious adjustment problems.

The After School Tutorial/Super Saturday Tutorial and Enrichment Program is a resource to assist students performing below acceptable standards academically, socially and emotionally.

Objective(s)

State the objective(s) in terms of the amount of improvement for each need.

The objective of the Tutorial/Enrichment Program is to ensure students will successfully complete the ninth grade year. The program is designed to help students to:

- improve academic performance
- increase daily attendance
- decrease suspensions/student code violations
- seek positive cultural/enrichment activities

Program Description

Please clearly describe the operation of this program. Please emphasize what will be different for the students and teachers.

Small tutorial classes allow teachers an opportunity to address individual student needs. Students not only benefit academically but self-esteem is also improved.

The Saturday program provides a more relaxed setting for students and teachers. After academic tutoring, students were able to select from the following enrichment activities:

- creative foods
- t-shirt design
- art expression
- computers

- physical fitness/recreation

Staffing

Please indicate the number and classification of the staff needed to implement this program, e.g., teachers, counselors, educational technicians, student assistants, etc.

The following staff were needed to implement the After School Tutorial/Super Saturday Tutorial and Enrichment Program.

Teachers: One teacher from each academic discipline is required for the Monday/Wednesday Program (English, mathematics, science and U.S. History), a total of four.

Student Assistants: Two student assistants were hired to tutor/assist teachers during the weekday tutorial program.

Additional Support Staff: Two assistant attendance officers monitored students who agreed to complete detention obligation(s) on Saturday in lieu of facing a 3-day suspension.

Secretary: One secretary to monitor office operations, supplies and duplication services for the Saturday program.

Evaluation

Please describe what data you will use to determine whether or not your objective(s) have been met.

The percentage of ninth grade failures for the 1996-97 school year will be compared to the percentage of ninth grade failures for the 1995-96 school year. In addition, we will survey classroom teachers to compare the performance of students that participated in this program.

Professional Development

Please describe the in-service training you provided in terms of content, time to be allotted, and if know, the trainers.

On-going professional development is an integral part of the Ninth Grade Restructuring Program.

Staff development workshops via satellite/video tape provided through National School Conference (NSC) training sessions were offered to all staff on the schedule below:

Thursday, February 6, 1997 Gang Drugs Violence 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. (Videotaped)

Wednesday, March 26, 1997	Multiple Intelligence	4:00 - 6:00 p.m. (Live)
Monday, April 21, 1997	Infusing Critical Thinking Skills Into The Curriculum	4:00 - 6:00 p.m. (Live)
Wednesday, May 27, 1997	Improving Student Achievement With Information Technology	4:00 - 6:00 p.m. (Live)

The After-School Program offers academic assistance on the following schedule:

Class	Day	Time
English/Social Studies	Monday	3:40 - 6:10 p.m.
Math/Science	Wednesday	4:00 - 6:30 p.m.

The Saturday Tutorial/Enrichment Program (STEP I-Super Saturday) includes tutoring in English mathematics, science, social studies, personal/social relationship, enrichment activities and parent workshops.

The Saturday program will also allow students an opportunity to complete detention obligations. The Saturday tutorial schedule is as follows:

Continental Breakfast	8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.
Orientation	8:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.
Classes begin	9:00 a.m. - 12:00 Noon

B. INCREASED GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING
(Finney High School)

Need

Describe the needs which substantiate the use of this program.

The developmental needs of students at the age/grade level of high school freshmen require increased understanding, support and decision making abilities to become responsible adults.

Objective(s)

State the objective(s) in terms of the amount of improvement for each need.

Students' awareness of the expectation for high school students
Students' development of the need for increased self-awareness, self-esteem and self-discipline
Students' ability to develop acceptable behavior
Students' ability to develop acceptable priorities
Students' desire to complete high school

Program Description

Please clearly describe the operation of this program. Please emphasize what will be different for the students and teachers.

The counselors and social worker assigned serviced classroom groups with three ten-week specially designed programs dealing with personal growth and development for the entire ninth grade population. In addition to their services, outside agencies assisted in assemblies and classroom guidance activities that would enhance the monthly theme being presented.

Staffing

Please indicate the number and classification of the staff needed to implement this program, e.g., teachers, counselors, educational technicians, student assistants, etc.

Classification	Number
Assistant principal	1
Guidance counselors	2
Social Worker	1
Compact technician	1

NOTE: Classroom teachers assisted by summarizing visits made by the counselor and social worker and by promoting monthly themes for the students' continued awareness.

Evaluation

Please describe what data you will use to determine whether or not your objective(s) have been met.

The data used to evaluate the success of the programs' objectives were depending upon assessment surveys given to selected staff members and students. We also compiled data from the Student Information System to decide the extent of student achievement, attendance and code violation and compared it with similar data from last year.

Professional Development

Please describe the in-service training you provided in terms of content, time to be allotted, and, if known, the trainers.

'Colors' for personality type and learning style identification

Given by: Dr. Diane Marshall-Reed
Given to: Teachers, counselors and administrators
Time: 3 hours

Ninth Grade Restructuring Planning

Given by: Ninth Grade Administrator and Social Worker
Given to: Teachers, counselors and administrators
Time: 2 hours

Compact for Ninth Graders

Given by: Ninth Grade Restructuring Team
Given to: All ninth graders and parents
Time: 2 hours

Restructuring and High School Awareness

Given by: Ninth Grade Restructuring Team
Given to: All ninth graders and parents
Time: 3 hours

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Literature Review and Bibliography Sources

LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on the literature review, it is apparent that effective programs address several levels of students' experiences:

- At the individual level, interpersonal relationships with adults in school
- At the classroom level, the instructional approaches and curriculum content
- At the school level, the policies which are relevant to dropouts, particularly tracking, absenteeism, suspension, retention (holding a student back to repeat a grade level), and personnel
- At the community level, the involvement of parents and community agencies which serve youth

At each level of students' experiences it is necessary to make the school experience relevant to students' needs.

Deschamps (1992) study examined research from 1980 to 1992 that addressed characteristics of high school dropouts. Data from 32 empirical studies were synthesized into an integrative review. A list of the most common characteristics of high school dropouts was generated and the major policy issues related to dropping out were identified and addressed. Four major categories of dropout characteristics were found: demographic, social and family, deviant behavior in society, and in-school. Some of the more common characteristics of dropouts included ethnicity, low socioeconomic status, coming from a single-parent family, a high rate of absenteeism, disciplinary problems, grade retention, low academic performance, and poor achievement test scores. The major policy issues related to the dropout problem included: the lack of uniform definition of the term dropout; the inaccuracy of statistics measuring local, state and national dropout rates; the correlation between grade retention and dropping out; the dropout rate in special education; and the need for more research on how many dropouts return to school or receive their Graduate Equivalency Diploma.

Because children who live in poverty drop out of school disproportionately, some might argue that important factors influencing high school graduation rates are not within the school's control. Though there are powerful economic and social forces influencing school attendance among poor, urban youth, intervention programs have been successful in affecting drop out rates. This review attempts to identify those factors within the realm of the school's control which can make going to school and graduating worthwhile to students who might otherwise drop out of school.

Interpersonal Relationships

The importance of students' interpersonal relationships with adults in the school is stressed more frequently than almost any other feature or effective programs.

Individualized Treatment/Instruction:

Several studies suggest that treating students as individuals helps to reduce the dropout rate. In Cippollone's study of six schools with differential dropout rates (1987), schools with lower dropout rates had administrators and teachers who were more willing to look at students individually and later specify discipline practices accordingly. Hess, Jr. and others (1986) cite more interaction between teachers and students as characteristic of schools with lower dropout rates in their study of eight Chicago high schools.

Small classes provide an opportunity for more frequent and more intimate contact between students and teachers. Ruby and Law's paper to the American Association of School Psychologists (1987) asserts that successful dropout programs have low student/teacher ratios and provide personal attention.

Caring:

Caring staff is repeatedly cited as an essential component of successful dropout prevention programs. It is also probably the most difficult component to operate. Mann (1985) suggests that teachers should know students by name and ask about their personal lives.

Finally, Cippollone's study of six schools with differential dropout rates (1987) concludes that in schools with lower dropout rates the staff had a sense of advocacy for students and were more willing to become involved in the social and affective needs of students.

Cultural Differences:

McLaughlin (1994) summarized various theories developed to explain minority language learners' failures to thrive in existing school systems. These theories may provide ideas for understanding dilemmas faced by minority youths.

Education psychologists have focused on the individual learner who, they believe, arrives at school broken by impoverishing home and community experiences. This deficit theory calls for helping individual students acquire mastery of skills before moving ahead, as well as providing enrichment to overcome deficits in background experiences.

Organizational theorists have focused on schools and school systems which they see as the primary culprits in school failure. These schools effectiveness proponents call for school restructuring and systemic reform efforts, including rethinking such important issues as how time is used and who is involved in planning and decision making.

Sociologists and anthropologists have focused on powerful economic and political structures that underpin all aspects of society and "create arrangements.....that systematically give voice to some and deny it to others" and are structured "around successful and unsuccessful competence displays such that winners and losers are inevitable" (McLaughlin, p. 53). These critical theorists call for teachers as coaches, pedagogy as problem solving, and a curriculum that addresses important themes connected to the lives of students.

Lastly, sociolinguists have a narrower focus on the teacher-learner interaction, where they find constant miscommunication resulting from different cultural and linguistic preferences for interaction. Cultural differences theorists believe solutions lie in teachers becoming knowledgeable about the culture and language of their students and adopting curriculum and teaching methods to students' needs.

The idea of cultural discontinuity contains elements of both of the last two theories just described. Increasingly, it has become an explanation for the difficulties minority students face in adjusting to and finishing high school.

Theories of cultural discontinuity have their origins in the anthropological studies of ethnic minority groups within a dominant, majority culture. According to students of cultural discontinuity theory, minority children having been initially raised in a distinctive culture of their own, are often thrust into a school system that promotes the values of the majority culture--not those of their own. If the resulting clash of culture continues, the minority child may feel forced to choose one culture at the expense of the other. A tragic paradox emerges: success (in school) becomes failure (in the community), and failure becomes success. Moreover, it has been argued that failure is not simply the passive act of neglecting to complete required tasks, but that it may be a status that is actively pursued by ethnic minority students in order to preserve their culture of origin. In other words, failure in school is a tacit cultural goal that must be achieved (McDermott, 1987; Spindler, 1987).

Self-Esteem:

An analysis of the research and scholarly literature (Walz, 1991) suggests a number of significant findings and generalizations about the importance and the effects of self-esteem upon youth and adults. Overall it would appear that self-esteem can be envisaged as a "social vaccine," a dimension of personality that empowers people and inoculates them against a wide spectrum of self-defeating and socially undesirable behavior (California Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem, 1990.) Among the more compelling generalizations to be made are the following:

- The family is a strong force in the development of self-esteem. The early years are particularly important in establishing an "authentic and abiding self-esteem" in a person.

- High parental self-esteem is crucial to the ability to nurture high self-esteem and personal effectiveness in children.

- School climate plays an important role in the development of the self-esteem of students. Schools that target self-esteem as a major school goal appear to be "more successful academically as well as in developing healthy self-esteem among their students." (California Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem, 1990, p. 5.)

- Self-esteem and achievement may be either the cause or the effect of each other, depending upon the person and the particular situation in which they function.

- Young girls who possess positive self-esteem are less likely to become pregnant as teenagers.

- Persons who hold themselves in high esteem are less likely to engage in destructive and self-destructive behavior including child abuse, alcohol and drug abuse, violence and crime.

- Exclusive attention to just self-esteem or personal achievement may well result in less favorable outcomes in either or both areas than when an approach is used which attends to both self-esteem and achievement. Walz (1991) in postulating the presence of an "esteem-achievement connection" emphasize the importance of presenting students with challenging experiences that enable the student to "earn" high esteem by successfully coping with difficult tasks.

- The choice to esteem oneself or not is ultimately the responsibility of the individual no matter what the background and prior experiences of the individual may be. High self-esteem can never be given to a person by another person or society. It must be sought, "earned" by the individual for him or herself.

- Self-esteem may be expressed as an overall generic characteristic, i.e., "she exhibits a high self-esteem" or as a more specific behavioral attribute, i.e., "he certainly has a high sense of self-esteem in tackling a difficult writing task, but he has absolutely no belief in his competence to do anything numerical." The experience of many counselors would favor a counseling intervention that explores a client's overall self-esteem (enhancing his/her generic self-esteem), but also focuses upon blockages which retard the expression of high self-esteem in specific areas.

- Writers and researchers show general, although by no means complete, agreement on the preconditions necessary for someone to demonstrate high self-esteem. Among the commonly used terms are: security, connectedness, uniqueness, assertiveness, competence, and spirituality.

Research shows (Waltz, 1991) that gaining greater knowledge and understanding of self-esteem can be beneficial to a counselor. However, to specifically impact upon a client's self-

esteem requires greater focus and effort upon the part of the counselor. Six action steps are suggested as guides for how a counselor can intervene to assist clients in enhancing their own self-esteem.

- Acknowledge that the self-esteem of a client is a vital determinant in his/her behavior and should be a major focus of the counseling relationship.

- Explore with the client the meaning of self-esteem and how his/her self-esteem has impacted upon past behaviors and actions (and can influence present and future plans and decisions.)

- Assist the client in assessing the internal and external forces contributing to or retarding their self-esteem. Develop a personally meaningful profile of esteem builders and detractors.

- Recognize that the self-esteem of the counselor has a stimulating or depressing effect upon the esteem of a client and that each needs to be aware of his/her self-esteem and its effect upon others.

- Assist the client in designing a self-esteem enhancement program that is customized to her/his learning style and desired goals.

- Above all else, act upon the conviction that self-esteem is a disposition to know oneself as someone who is competent to cope with the realities and demands of life and as personally worthy of experiencing joy and happiness. Acting upon this conviction a counselor will then know that she/he can neither bestow nor induce self-esteem in another person. Through their efforts, however, counselors can assist a person to learn the processes by which they can examine the antecedents of their self-esteem, and take responsibility for thinking and acting in ways which will heighten their own self-esteem and hence their capacity to experience life confidently and joyously.

Student Motivation:

Much of the recent research on student motivation has rightly centered on the classroom, where the majority of learning takes place and where students are most likely to acquire a strong motivation to gain new knowledge. Making the classroom a place that naturally motivates students to learn is much easier when students and teachers function in an atmosphere where academic success and the motivation to learn are expected and rewarded.

An environment that nurtures educational motivation can be cultivated at home, in the classroom, or throughout an entire school. One of the most effective avenues for engendering student motivation is a school's culture. According to Deal (1987), school culture can be

embodied and transformed through channels such as shared values, heroes, rituals, ceremonies, stories, and cultural networks.

Davis (1989) suggests using a wide variety of activities and symbols to communicate motivational goals. "Visible symbols," he says, "illustrate and confirm what is considered to be important in the school." He suggests using "school newsletters, statements of goals, behavior codes, rituals, symbols, and legends" to "convey messages of what the school really values." Staging academic awards assemblies, awarding trophies for academic success and displaying them in trophy cases, scheduling motivational speakers, and publicizing students' success can help them see that the desire to be successful academically is recognized and appreciated.

Klug (1989) notes that school leaders can influence levels of motivation by "shaping the school's instructional climate," which in turn shapes "the attitudes of teachers, students, parents, and the community at large toward education." By effectively managing this aspect of a school's culture, principals can "increase both student and teacher motivation and indirectly impact learning gains."

School administrators can take advantage of times of educational change by including strategies for increasing student motivation. Acknowledging that school restructuring is inevitable, Maehr (1991) challenges school leaders to ensure that "motivation and the investment in learning of students will be enhanced" as a result of school reform: School leaders have seldom "considered motivation vis-a-vis the current restructuring movement," he says, "and few have considered that the school as an entity in its own right, may have effects that supersede those of individual classrooms and the acts of individual teachers."

A positive "psychological environment" strongly influences student motivation, says Maehr. School leaders can create this type of environment by establishing policies and programs that:

- stress goal setting and self-regulation/management
- offer students choices in instructional settings
- reward students for attaining "personal best" goals
- foster teamwork through group learning and problem-solving experiences
- replace social comparisons of achievement with self-assessment and evaluation techniques
- teach time management skills and offer self-paced instruction when possible

Instructional Approaches

The research on dropouts almost universally recommends non-traditional instructional approaches in small class groups. Research suggests utilizing low student/teacher ratios, a multi-media approach, and flexible course scheduling.

Low Student/Teacher Ratios:

Low student/teacher ratios provide greater opportunities for personalized attention. The U.S. General Accounting Office's survey of dropout program (1987) found that individualized instruction favorably influenced dropout reduction.

Many large urban school districts where the dropout problem is particularly acute do not have the resources to provide the recommended student/teacher ratios. However, as Strother (1986) points out, "large schools make it difficult for teachers to respond to individual student's needs." Wheelock and Dorman (1988) address this problem in their research findings regarding adolescents by recommending a team teaching approach, homerooms, and teacher-based counseling as ways to create "smallness within bigness."

Wheelock (1990) states that recent literature suggests it is not students' backgrounds, but schools' response to students' backgrounds that determine students' success in school. School practices and policies adopted in response to student performance in attendance, academics, and behavior also have a significant impact on students' decision to leave school before graduating.

According to a literature review by Quinn (1991) school practices such as placement of at-risk students in alternative, nontraditional programs, individualized counseling, low student-teacher ratio, and peer tutoring successfully lower dropout rates, whereas remediation, retention in grade, tracking, and suspension exacerbate the problem.

Multi-Media Approach:

Media refers to the means of communication. Students at risk are not responding to traditional methods of teaching, such as lectures and seat work. Many researchers feel that creative approaches are needed, particularly to teach basic reading and math skills to older students. Such approaches provide students with opportunities to experience success in school where they have previously failed.

Other researchers support the concept of a multi-media approach which allows students to experience success. Wheelock and Dorman (1988) suggest varying teaching methods and using diverse instructional approaches to provide multiple opportunities for success.

Flexible Scheduling:

In addition to innovation and variety of instructional approaches, changes in the scheduling of classes are encouraged. The U.S. General Accounting Office survey of programs (1987) finds that "flexibility in curriculum and school hours are important to prevent dropping by students unable to progress in the standard school setting."

Cooperative Learning:

Johnson and Johnson (1987) are well-known proponents of this last type of grouping, called cooperative learning. These heterogeneous groups are based on positive interdependence among the group members who help and support one another. Their goals focus on bringing each member's learning to the maximum and on maintaining good working relationships among members. "Nothing is more basic than learning to use one's knowledge in cooperative interaction with others," the Johnsons' state. And they continue: "Greater achievement is typically found in collaborative situations where peers work together than in situations where individuals work alone..."

Johnson and Johnson (1987) recommend assigning students of high, medium, and low abilities in the same group. They also suggest that it is very beneficial for those students who are not as task oriented as others to be put with their more academically oriented peers. Teachers should allow students to choose one person with whom they would like to work, and then carefully place these pairs with others to maximize the heterogeneous makeup of each group.

As the group works together as a team, some of the benefits predicted for individual members are higher critical thinking competencies, more positive social interaction with classmates, improved collaborative competencies, an understanding of other perspectives, and more self-esteem. The Johnsons believe that:

- Cooperative learning procedures may be used successfully with any type of academic task, although they are most successful when conceptual learning is required.

- Whenever possible, cooperative groups should be structured so that controversy and academic disagreements among group members are possible and are managed constructively.

- Students should be encouraged to keep each other on task and to discuss assigned material in ways that ensure elaborate rehearsal and the use of higher learning strategies.

- Students should be encouraged to support each other's efforts to achieve.

Educators must make many choices every year about grouping arrangements. Good teachers who provide supportive environments for their students and who are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of grouping will make the decisions that are right for themselves, for their classroom situation, and for their students.

Cross-Age Tutoring:

Although references in the literature to cross-age and peer tutoring programs are sparse (Natriello and others, 1988), (Wheelock, 1988), these programs appear to produce significant results. Cross-age tutoring seems to meet several needs of students at risk:

- Feeling important, competent, and needed in a school setting
- Developing an interpersonal, interdependent relationship with someone in school
- Reviewing basic math and reading skills without the stigma of remedial education
- Active involvement in the learning process
- Providing individualized instruction to younger students
- Providing an opportunity for community service

Gaustand (1993) states that one to one tutoring programs, such as peer and cross-age tutoring, can result in emotional and learning benefits for the tutor and the tutee. In cross-age tutoring, the tutor is older than the tutee. Advantages of these programs are that tutors are better than adults in relating to their tutees on a cognitive, emotional, and social level. Also, cross-age tutoring offers the tutor the higher status of being older but still being close in age. Tutors can benefit from cross-age and peer tutoring because it allow them to review material, and to improve thinking and communication skills.

Positive Discipline

Criticizing, discouraging, creating obstacles and boundaries, blaming, shaming, using sarcastic or cruel humor, or using physical punishment are some negative disciplinary methods used with young children.

Any adult might occasionally do any of these things. Doing any or all of them more than once in a while means that a negative approach to discipline has become a habit and urgently needs to be altered before the child experiences low self-esteem as a permanent part of his/her personality.

ERIC (1990) in an article on "Positive Discipline" states the following as good approaches to discipline:

- increase a student's self-esteem
- allow the student to feel valued
- encourage the student to feel cooperative
- enable the student to learn gradually the many skills involved in taking some responsibility for what happens to him/her
- motivate the student to change his/her strategy rather than to blame others
- help the student to take initiative, relate successfully to others, and solve problems

School discipline has two main goals: (1) ensure the safety of staff and students, and (2) create an environment conducive to learning. Serious student misconduct involving violent or criminal behavior defeats these goals and often makes headlines in the process. However, the commonest discipline problems involve non-criminal student behavior (Moles, 1989).

These less dramatic problems may not threaten personal safety, but they still negatively affect the learning environment. Disruptions interrupt lessons for all students, and disruptive students lose even more learning time.

As educator researcher Daniel Duke (1989) points out, "The goal of good behavior is necessary, but not sufficient to ensure academic growth." Effective school discipline strategies seek to encourage responsible behavior and to provide all students with a satisfying school experience as well as to discourage misconduct.

When John Hopkins University researchers Gary D. Gottfredson and Denise C. Gottfredson (1989) analyzed data from over 600 of the nation's secondary schools, they found that the following school characteristics were associated with discipline problems:

- rules were unclear or perceived as unfairly or inconsistently enforced
- students did not believe in the rules
- teachers and administrators did not know what the rules were or disagreed on the proper responses to student misconduct
- teacher-administration cooperation was poor or the administration inactive
- teachers tended to have punitive attitudes

- misconduct was ignored
- schools were large or lacked adequate resources for teaching

Written policies should be developed with input from everyone who will be affected by them. Once developed, discipline policies must be communicated to staff, students, parents and community. But a policy on paper is meaningless in itself. Ongoing administrative support, in-service training in new techniques, continued communication, and periodic evaluation and modification are needed to adopt a school discipline plan to the changing needs of the school community.

Curriculum Content

The curriculum content is the "what" of instruction, or the information and knowledge which the school system attempts to convey to its students.

The research on dropouts consistently recommends a curriculum which focuses on infusing basic skills, stressing practical skills, and offering a multiple abilities curriculum.

Basic Skills Instruction:

Students who are at risk of dropping out are typically those who exhibit poor basic academic skills (Wheelage, 1988). Often middle school curriculums assume basic reading comprehension and math skills, however, many students may not have mastered these basic skills yet (Wheelock and Dorman, 1988). Students who are weak in basic skills at the middle school level have increased difficulties in high school. It is extremely important that dropout prevention programs recognize and address the need for students to master basic reading and math skills.

Hornbeck (1991) states that while research has shown that computer-assisted instruction (CAI) can help at-risk students learn basic skills such as reading, writing and mathematics, studies have also revealed that CAI helps students think critically, solve problems and draw inferences.

Stress Practical Skills:

Because the irrelevance of the school experience to students' needs is considered to be the major cause of dropping out, stressing practical skills is recommended by some researchers. Ruby and Law's paper presented at the Annual Meeting of School Psychologists (1987) states that successful programs stress the immediate and practical and offer opportunities for paid employment. Strother (1986) also recommends that the curriculum should focus on real-life problems.

Multiple Abilities Curriculum:

Students who do not experience success in school may not have opportunities to use their strongest abilities as part of traditional curriculums. A multiple abilities curriculum provides a chance for students to use a wide range of skills to earn credit towards graduation.

Natriello and others (1988) assert that schools should offer a multiple abilities curriculum and move beyond the narrow range of academic tasks which rely on reading skills to allow students to experience success. Wheelage (1988) recommends an "experiential" curriculum including community service, career internship, political/social action, and/or outdoor adventure.

Researchers (1990) of the Office of Research, Evaluation and Assessment, New York City Board of Education, state that poor and minority students are at the greatest risk of failure because of a gap between home and school. This gap is the difference in the expectations parents and teachers have of students, and between the social and language skills required of students at home and at school. When the schools represent an alien culture to students and fail to represent parental interests, students disengage from the school culture and the socioeconomic universe it represents. The following traditional compensatory education approaches are not effective in educating at-risk students: (1) retention; (2) pullout programs; and (3) in-class aides. The following strategies are more promising: (1) reduced class size; (2) early intervention; (3) cohesive social unit; (4) comprehensive services; (5) intensive interventions; (6) bilingual instructional services (7) culturally sensitive programs (8) built-in flexibility; (9) active teaching; (10) engaged learning; (11) cooperative learning; and (12) community involvement.

School Policies

Monitoring/Early Intervention:

The importance of identifying potential dropouts early and then immediately taking action to re-engage them in the school is almost universally agreed upon in the literature on dropout prevention.

Some researchers recommend monitoring and intervention at the earliest points in a student's career. Gruskin and other (1987) recommend good preschool and early childhood programs and Beck and Muia (1980) suggest intervention in nursery school and kindergarten. Those who advocate monitoring and intervention in early elementary school include Walz (1987).

The middle school years are viewed by other researchers as the critical monitoring and intervention stage because this is when students begin to feel disconnected (Sherwood, 1987), (Massachusetts Advocacy Center, 1986), (Wheelock an Dorman, 1988).

Other researchers who advocate monitoring and early intervention include, Natriello and others (1988), Naylor (1987), O'Connor (1985), Sherman (1987), Strother (1986), and Sween and Kyle (1987).

Focus on Absenteeism:

Chronic absenteeism is an obvious early warning sign of potential dropout (Sherman, 1987), (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1987), (Wheelage, 1988). The school's reaction to a student's absenteeism can send a strong message to the student regarding his or her importance to the school. The school's efforts to promote daily school attendance help to reduce dropout rates (Walz, 1987).

Bonikowski (1987), suggests nurturing a cooperative, rather than an adversarial, relationship with parents regarding students' attendance. Wheelock and Dorman's (1988) suggestions include the following:

- Establish an attendance team for monitoring attendance
- Interview students regarding reasons for non-attendance
- Maintain persistent contact with students' homes

Herman (1991) states that educators must take into account the changing social, cultural, and economic trends' contributions to high absenteeism and dropout rates. No curriculum can succeed if the students are not in attendance to learn, develop and advance in society.

Literature on absenteeism written after 1985 demonstrates a shift of focus from the student as truant to the school as part of both the problem and the solution. Four major principles are necessary to any successful intervention--awareness, change in perspectives, early intervention, and cooperation and involvement. Components of an intervention include developing and implementing attendance policies, monitoring, tracking, and recording; getting parents involved; providing counseling and guidance; and providing relevant curriculum or alternative program. Research shows that programs (Harte, 1995) implemented as school wide improvements have consistently been successful in reducing attendance problems. Effective schools are student-centered and operate as: a caring institutional and functional community, a community organization, an experimenter and risk-taker, and a team.

In School Suspension:

Traditional approaches to student discipline include suspending a student for severe infractions. However, a history of suspension is not only predictive of dropout (Wheelock, 1986), but suspension actually encourages students to dropout by sending a clear message that they are not wanted in school (Massachusetts Advocacy Center, 1986).

In-school suspension differs from traditional suspension practices because the student stays on the school premises while serving the term of his/her suspension. Supervised, in-school suspension which includes academic support is recommended as a means to maintain a relationship with students and to make them feel as though they belong in school (Mahood, 1981), (Wheelock and Dorman, 1988).

Roquemore (1991) suggested that intervention in-school suspension programs could counteract students' low self-concepts and negative attitudes toward teachers. Such programs would include: parent training, teacher staff development, school programs that focus on one to one relationships with students, remediation of academic difficulties and administrative monitoring of individual teachers and evaluation of the school involvement.

Non-Retention:

Students who have been retained in a grade are much more likely to dropout than those who have not (Massachusetts Advocacy Center, 1986), (Sherman, 1987), (Wheelock, 1986). Walz (1987) quantifies the relationship between retention and dropout in his literature review:

"The child who has been held back one grade level is 60 times more likely to become a dropout that a student who has not, and the child who has been held back two grade levels is 250 times more likely to become a dropout."

Wheelock and Dorman (1988) argue strongly against retention and suggest giving students specialized instruction with a designated target date at which they will be "caught up" and reintegrated into their appropriate grade level. Some programs they suggest include the following:

- Competency-based curriculum in multi-grade groupings
- Smaller class size
- Summer school with different teaching techniques stressing more active student involvement.

George (1993) suggest that: (a) school districts and schools should disseminate current research on retention to schools staffs (b) school districts with high retention rates should develop a plan to reduce the rate and improve the instructional program for at-risk students (c) school districts should monitor differential effects of retention for different ethnic groups and boys and girls.

Sherwood (1993) states that despite a growing trend toward retention in grade of low-achieving students and apparent public support for the practice, many educators and psychologists disagree with the perception that flunking is an appropriate response to poor academic performance. Research reported in the past two decades indicates that grade-level retention

produces little improvement in student achievement. Some studies presented evidence that students required to repeat a grade actually made less progress than comparable classmates who were promoted. In addition, there are many studies that demonstrate significant psychological damage to children, particularly in terms of lowered self-esteem. Still others associate an increase in the dropout level with retention in grade. In Florida, a number of approaches to improving student achievement without resorting to grade retention have been proposed. Among them are the following:

- tutorial programs, including peer tutoring, cross-age tutoring, and adult volunteer tutoring, coordinated with classroom instruction;
- extended basic skills programs, which eliminate "non-essentials" from the student day, with the additional time being applied to reading, writing, and mathematics;
- cooperative learning programs;
- extended-year programs, achieved in Florida because of funding constraints through summer school; and
- individualized instruction through such technologies as interactive video, word processing, and story starters.

Students At Risk:

Most studies agree that the main factors associated with dropping out include students' socioeconomic status, school behavior, and academic achievement.

"Dropout rates are higher for students coming from low socioeconomic backgrounds, from single-parent families, and from non-English language family backgrounds," stated Frase (1989) in the first annual report by the National Center for Education Statistics. This nationwide study also found higher dropout rates for students living in cities than in suburbs or rural areas, and in the South and West rather than in the Northeast. Students who marry or have children, or who have had problems with the law or school authorities, are also at greater risk.

Academic factors are clearly related to dropping out. Students who received poor grades, who had repeated a grade, who were overage for their class, and who had poor attendance for reasons other than illness were more likely to drop out. "A powerful predictor... was the attendance record during the first four months of tenth grade," Frase reported.

Barber and McLellan (1987) found that dropouts in a Wisconsin community showed clear indications of academic problems by the third grade. Their achievement test scores were significantly lower than those of their classmates and also below their ability as measured by intelligence tests; teacher comments alone identified potential dropouts with 63 percent accuracy. Poor attendance, failing grades, and low overall GPA marked these students' high school careers.

Conley (1992) in his research states that national and state policies are establishing expectations that essentially all students will graduate from high school. As schools begin to adjust their goals accordingly, they found most of their basic organizational practices must change. At-risk students demand personalized education, meaningful material, success-based tasks, continuous contact with trusted adults, and a stable peer group.

Traditional grouping and grading practices do not facilitate success for at-risk students. Teachers have a very difficult time accepting the notion that all students can succeed without standards being lowered. There is an increasing tension between meeting the needs of both "gifted" and "at-risk" students within the traditional organizational paradigm.

Restructuring schools are using cooperative learning strategies, project centered learning, learning teams, schools-within-schools, block scheduling, advisor-advisee programs, enhanced parental involvement, expansion of learning into the community, and an increasing integration of vocational and academic curricula into "applied academics" courses or strategies to meet the needs of diverse group of students.

Parent/Community Involvement

The complex needs of at risk students call for the utilization of a wide range of resources. The school's efforts to coordinate with others who have an interest in the student's life can result in synergistic benefits to the student at risk.

Parents:

Parents may be the most important force keeping children in school. At the high school level there is a tendency for parental involvement to decline. Efforts must be made to re-engage parents in their children's education.

> "Student achievement is strongly influenced by efforts to bridge home and school as a team" (Ochoa, 1987).
>
> "The collaboration with families is an important intervention strategy" (Willis, 1986).
>
> "Encouraging parental involvement in school learning activities helps prevent dropping out" (Walz, 1987).

The above observations illustrate the conventional wisdom regarding the role of parental influence on dropout prevention. It has been found that successful dropout programs have activities to enhance parental support (Naylor, 1987). Programs should develop policies to help increase parents' interest and monitoring of their children's progress (Strother, 1986), (Ekstrom and others, 1986).

Wheelock and Dorman (1988) suggest "blurring the home-school boundary line" by involving parents in adult education classes at the school, offering a GED program for parents, and involving parents in policy making.

Wagonseller (1992) states that despite the difficulties of parenting, few people have actually been trained to be parents or to become involved in their children's education. To address these problems, each community needs to develop a comprehensive parent involvement model.

A community parent involvement model would include the following elements:

- training parent trainers to conduct parenting classes in every school
- change the focus of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) to parent-teacher administration
- develop in each school a parent education program for expectant parents and parents of very young children
- develop a parent education program for parents of elementary age children
- develop a parent education program for parents of children with special needs (Example: disabilities, gifted, etc.)
- develop monthly parents' workshops on topics of interest to parents
- create a family lifestyle class for high school students

Research has shown that one of the most promising ways to increase students' achievement is to involve their families (Charkin, 1993; Henderson and Berla, 1994). They also found that family participation in education was twice as predictive of academic learning as family socioeconomic status. Establishing partnerships with families has many benefits for schools and families, but Epstein says, "the main reason to create such partnerships is to help all youngsters succeed in school and in later life" (1995, p. 701).

Research on families and student learning has shown that students at all grade levels do better work in school, feel better about themselves as learners, set higher goals, and dream bigger dreams when their parents are knowledgeable, supportive, encouraging and involved with their education. Parent involvement in education can take a variety of forms, including volunteering to help in the school, doing a presentation for a class, helping chaperon field trips, and supplying materials. The most important type of involvement, however, is encouraging, monitoring, and helping your children with their schoolwork. When parents and school work together, children grow in an environment of consistent expectations and shared purpose, where children become better students and parents become better teachers.

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